

REMARKS

The pending Office Action addresses and rejects claims 1-26 and 29-63. Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and allowance based on the amendments and remarks submitted herewith.

Amendments to the Claims

Applicants amend claims 1, 5, 8-10, 29, 33, 36-38, and 63 to replace the term “tissue attachment means” with “tissue attachment member.” Support for this amendment can be found throughout the specification, but at least at paragraphs [0020], [0021], [0060], [0062], [0078], [0090], [0092] – [0095], [0097], [0099] – [0101], and FIGS. 1-8, 14, 21-30, 33, 36, 39, 40, 43-47, 50-54, 58, and 59 of the published application. No new matter is added.

Rejections Pursuant to 35 U.S.C. §§ 102(b) and 103(a)

The Examiner rejects claims 29-31, 33-35, 40-43, 45, 46, and 48 pursuant to 35 U.S.C. § 102 as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,332,778 of Choung (“Choung”). The Examiner also rejects claims 1-28, 32, 36-39, 44, 47, and 49-63 pursuant to 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious over Choung in view of various additional references.

During a telephone conversation on September 28, 2007 between the Examiner and Applicants’ undersigned representative, the Examiner indicated that the amendments submitted herewith overcome the pending rejections. Accordingly, claims 1-26 and 29-63 distinguish over Choung by itself as well as Choung in view of the additional references cited by the Examiner and thus represent allowable subject matter.

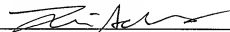
Conclusion

All pending claims are believed to be in condition for allowance. If the Examiner believes that an interview would facilitate the resolution of any outstanding issues, he is kindly requested to contact the undersigned.

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Respectfully submitted,



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